

Families and Literacy

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Wisconsin State Reading Association www.wsra.org



The goal of the Families and Literacy Committee of the WSRA is to develop and carry out plans which convey to parents the value of involvement in reading activities with children.

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Amy Sippert – chair

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Family Reading Fun

School is back in session. Chances are your child has daily homework tasks to complete each night. Does this turn into a nightly battle? If you answered yes, read on to find some suggestions that may help lessen the struggle.

*Give your child some active time when he or she gets home before getting down to the business of homework. The increase in oxygen to the brain can help it recharge and refocus.

*Take "brain breaks" during homework time. Every 10-20 minutes, take a break from the homework and do something physical like jumping rope or running in place for 2-3 minutes.

Putting on your child's favorite tune and letting her dance and shake the stress away is another great brain break activity. Follow up with a glass of water to hydrate the brain and then get back to work.

*Does your child have to study spelling words each week? Try adding in a physical element to studying. Using a balloon, have your child hit and spell the words. For example, if the word is dog, have your child hit you the balloon and say "d". Hit it back. He hits the balloon back to you and says "o", etc. Have your child alternate hands each time he hits the balloon. After your child can spell it forwards, have him try

spelling it backwards! This will force your child to visualize the word, aiding in future retrieval.

*While reading longer passages a tracker, such as a bookmark, can be a great tool to keep the eyes focused. However, instead of putting the bookmark under the line of print, put it on top. Your eyes naturally tend to go to the top of the page. This forces the eyes to keep moving down the page. It also helps the child look ahead to what is next, which promotes reading in phrases verses word by word.

Adding in physical activity and brain breaks can help get this school year off and running in a positive direction.

Literacy Tips

For the young reader: Picturing stories in your mind is a great strategy to aid in comprehension. Not sure if your child is visualizing while reading? Try this. Read aloud a story to your child but don't show him or her the pictures. Tell your child to make a movie in his or her mind based off of what you have read. Then have your child describe what he or she sees. Does it match what you read? Did it make sense? If it did, great! If not, you may need to model first. Read the passage again and describe what you see or hear. Explain why you pictured what you did. This strategy is especially useful when the text has limited picture support.

For the teen reader: Tapping into the visual modality is helpful for older learners as well. Encourage your teen to use pictures and visuals when trying to remember important information and concepts. For example, use flow charts to organize information that has steps. Use graphs and charts to organize larger pieces of data. Add pictures to notes to represent the key ideas or concepts. Computer programs such as *Inspiration* are also great tools to use to help create visual webs of ideas.

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Meet the Authors



Joan Steiner

A graduate of Barnard College in New York City and recipient of numerous art and design awards, Steiner is the author of the Look-Alikes series of books. These books challenge children to find everyday objects used to construct three-dimensional scenes. Children will spend hours searching and seeking to find the hidden objects. With themes like Christmas and Around the World, Look-Alikes will keep kids' visual perception skills in focus!

Henry Winkler and Lin Oliver

Winkler, most recognized for his role as the Fonz in *Happy Days*, used true life experiences to create the Hank Zipzer series. The series follows the everyday adventures of a bright boy with learning challenges. The character, Hank, uses unconventional ways to overcome any obstacle he faces. These funny and touching books deal with learning differences in a gentle yet humorous way. Working with Oliver, a writer and producer of movies, books and television series for children and families, they have created 17 books in the series. To find out more go to www.hankzipzer.com



Website Spotlight

Looking for an app to create calm and help refocus your child? Try the MeMoves App available on iTunes. MeMoves uses music, images and movement to engage the mind and body to decrease stress, improve mode and enhance focus. Check it out at www.thinkingmoves.com